

Homelessness MATTERS



February 12th, 2026

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COALITION NEWS

Coalition Welcomes Two New Staff Members!



Director of Operations: Jessica Cantermen

Jessica Cantermen, LSW joined the Coalition as Director of Operations in early January. A social worker by training, Jessica brings nearly a decade of experience in direct service and nonprofit administration, with expertise in grant and project management and systems improvement. She is excited to strengthen the Coalition's internal operations and support the organization's role as a convener, catalyst, and go-to resource for providers and stakeholders across the state, helping advance solutions that make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. In her free time, Jessica enjoys reading, hiking, and spending time with her family, friends, and two spoiled cats.



AmeriCorps Program Director: Nathalia Allenza

Nathalia Allenza joined the Coalition as the AmeriCorps Program Manager in January. She graduated from Princeton University and has experience working with international and public-sector organizations. She has experience in immigration policy, community integration initiatives, and refugee and asylum-seeker resettlement. Nathalia is excited to bring her passion for service, equity, and community empowerment to the Coalition as she supports AmeriCorps members and strengthens programs across New Jersey. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with loved ones and finding meaningful ways to give back to the community.

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



New Jersey's Homeless Population Is Growing. So Too Are Concerns About Federal Assistance Program Budgets Being Slashed

WHYY

New Jersey lawmakers renewed a push to fund suicide prevention and crisis services by invoking the legacy of former Gov. Dick Codey, a longtime advocate for mental health care and services for people experiencing homelessness. The proposed funding would support the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, mobile response teams, stabilization centers, and temporary housing—resources advocates say are critical for people in crisis, including those without stable shelter. Supporters argue the measure could prevent emergencies from escalating into homelessness or help stabilize individuals already living without housing.



Legal Experts, Domestic Violence Advocates, Homeless Service Providers, Housing Champions and More Sound Alarm Over Piscataway's Proposed Hotel/Motel Law

TAP Into Piscataway

New Jersey advocacy organizations are urging Piscataway's Mayor and Council to remove a proposed ordinance from its February 10, 2026 agenda and instead convene a stakeholder working group. The ordinance would cap hotel and motel stays at 89 days, exclude people charged with certain crimes, and require guest information to be shared with the Township without a warrant, raising concerns about constitutional and civil rights violations. Advocates warn the measure could harm vulnerable residents and are calling for more compassionate, collaborative solutions to address homelessness.



[Homelessness In Union County: Nonprofit Talks Challenges, Welcomes New COO](#)

Patch

Michael Callahan, former director of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' Office of Homelessness Prevention, is returning to Bridges Outreach as chief operating officer as homelessness rises across Union, Essex, and Somerset counties. His return comes amid frigid winter conditions, growing housing insecurity, and funding uncertainty heading into 2026, as the nonprofit expands street outreach and housing support to help more people move from crisis to stability.



[Paterson Gets \\$14M Boost for Youth, Homeless Services, and Food Programs](#)

TAPinto Paterson

Paterson is set to receive \$3.2 million in federal funding for a new homeless services hub at the former Salvation Army building on Van Houten Street, part of a larger \$14.5 million investment in community projects in New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District. The hub will include a multi-purpose building offering shelter and social services, while additional funds in the package support related efforts such as food security programs through City Green and expanded youth and community services. Congresswoman Nellie Pou said the funding will help strengthen support for the city's most vulnerable residents.



[Burst Pipe Leaves Montclair Homeless Outreach Nonprofit Scrambling](#)

Patch

A burst pipe has flooded the MESH Café in Montclair, temporarily shutting down a key hub that provides meals and overnight shelter to people experiencing homelessness during extreme weather. The nonprofit says the damage comes at a critical point in



[NJ Towns Take Last-Ditch Effort to Upend Affordable Housing Law to Supreme Court](#)

NEW JERSEY GLOBE

A coalition of New Jersey mayors is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to halt the rollout of the state's affordable housing law after losing bids for a delay in federal district and appeals courts. The group, Local Leaders for Responsible Planning, is

its busy Winter Respite season and is seeking a temporary space, along with donations and community support, to keep services running.

seeking an emergency stay from Justice Samuel Alito to pause the March 15 zoning deadline while they challenge how housing obligations are calculated. The law, enacted two years ago, is intended to address an estimated statewide shortage of 150,000 affordable housing units.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



'Deeply Illogical': This Man's Life Work Could End Homelessness - and Trump is Doing All He Can to Stop It

The Guardian

Sam Tsemberis, founder of the evidence-based “Housing First” model, was recently censored by a federal agency while preparing a presentation, reflecting the Trump administration’s broader push against his approach to homelessness. Housing First, which provides immediate, no-strings-attached housing alongside supportive services, has consistently shown that about 85% of participants remain housed long term—far outperforming “Treatment First” models that require sobriety or treatment before housing. Despite decades of federal support and documented success in the U.S. and Europe, the administration has moved to cut funding and formally reject the model, prompting lawsuits and widespread concern among advocates. While Housing First continues to gain strong backing across Europe, many U.S. providers now fear political retaliation and funding losses as homelessness rises amid housing shortages and social service cuts.



Proof Point: How the Appropriations Bill is a Sign of Our Collective Power

NAEH

Congress has passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026, funding most of the federal government through Sept. 30, 2026, and rejecting the President’s FY2026 budget proposal. The bill provides \$77.3 billion for HUD programs—\$7.2 billion more than last year—including \$4.417 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants, with key protections and timelines to ensure Continuum of Care renewals are funded promptly. Although no new funding was added for Emergency Housing Vouchers, the bill adds \$264 million to support transitions to other rental assistance programs, and advocates say the result reflects the power of sustained grassroots pressure.





[Inequality, Not Regulation, is Stoking America's Housing Crisis](#)

UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs

New research from UCLA Professor Michael Storper challenges the idea that simply building more housing will make it more affordable. In a paper titled *"Inequality, not regulation, drives America's housing affordability crisis,"* Storper and co-authors argue that rising prices are driven more by inequality than underbuilding and call for direct solutions like publicly funded housing vouchers, rent protections, and alternative housing models such as co-ops, community land trusts, and public housing. Storper emphasizes that America isn't building too little—it's producing the wrong kind of housing for those who need it most.

[RFK Jr. Unveils \\$100M Effort to Tackle Addiction, Homelessness and Mental Illness](#)

WFVN

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced a \$100 million federal investment for the new STREETS Initiative, aimed at connecting people experiencing homelessness and addiction to treatment, housing, and long-term recovery as part of President Trump's Great American Recovery Initiative. The program will fund outreach, psychiatric care, medical stabilization, and crisis intervention, reflecting a shift toward treatment-focused responses to rising addiction and street homelessness. Kennedy also unveiled a \$10 million Assisted Outpatient Treatment grant program for adults with serious mental illness and highlighted additional SAMHSA funding for mental health and substance use services nationwide.



[Which American City Spends the Most on Homelessness? Spoiler: The Answer is Unsatisfying](#)

The Oregonian

A new analysis asks which U.S. city spends the most on homelessness but finds the answer is complicated and ultimately unsatisfying due to inconsistent data and definitions. Cities like Portland invest heavily in publicly funded nonprofit services, housing



[Medical Students Learn to Care for Homeless Through Poverty Simulation](#)

FOX LOCAL LAS VEGAS

In Las Vegas, where thousands of men, women, and children are homeless, experts say lack of access to medical care can be an even bigger barrier than housing itself. Touro University Nevada is training future occupational therapists with a poverty-level simulation that forces students to navigate real-life obstacles like transportation, childcare, and healthcare while trying to keep a

subsidies, and supportive programs, yet outcomes vary and comparisons are difficult. The story highlights individuals such as Leilani Vernon-Reyes, whose life was stabilized through subsidized housing and case management after years of homelessness and addiction. It underscores that while cities spend significant sums, measuring effectiveness—and determining who spends “the most”—is far from straightforward.

family housed. The effort aims to prepare providers to better serve people experiencing homelessness, even as Nevada faces a shortage of occupational therapists that leaves the most vulnerable residents at the back of the line for care.



Renters Use 'Rent Now, Pay Later' Services to Manage Monthly Payments, but Fees Raise Concerns

AP

As rents climb and incomes stay strained, “rent now, pay later” services are increasingly used by struggling renters—raising concerns that such high-cost credit could push more households toward homelessness. These programs let renters split their monthly bills, but fees and effective interest rates often soar into triple digits, deepening financial instability for low-income and gig workers who are already cost-burdened. Experts warn that these services don’t address the root problem of housing affordability and may even enable landlords to raise rents, increasing the risk that more families could lose their homes.

We love to share news about the accomplishments, events job opportunities and noteworthy activities of NJ's homelessness service agencies. If you have something to share, please send it to us at info@NJCEH.org

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